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FBI given more power to investigate

CINCINNATI

The FBI has been given more power to investigate a Detroit lawyer once suspected by the agency of being a member of a Middle East terrorist organization.

The 6th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals on Thursday vacated an injunction that had limited the FBI's investigation of Abdeen M. Jabara.

The appellate court noted that Jabara is "of Arab extraction" and "has over the years been interested and active in Arab causes."

The FBI has been investigating Jabara off and on since 1967. In 1971, the FBI said it had "reasonable cause to believe that Jabara was in fact a foreign agent." The National Security Agency had been intercepting messages sent by Jabara and turning them over to the FBI.

The FBI also said it had received "solid information from the Central Intelligence Agency that Jabara was, indeed, a cadre member of a Middle East terrorist organization."

Jabara filed a federal court lawsuit, contending his Fourth Amendment privacy rights were being violated. He also alleged the FBI was violating the federal Privacy Act in his case.

Detroit U.S. District Court Judge Ralph Freeman agreed with Jabara and issued an injunction against the FBI.

The injunction prevented the FBI from "recording, maintaining, using or disseminating information about (Jabara's) political beliefs, communications, speeches, writings, associations or activities, both public or private, which do not relate to specific criminal acts."

But the appellate court Thursday sided with the FBI and vacated Freeman's injunction against the FBI.

"Jabara's fourth amendment rights were not violated," said the appellate court.

As for Freeman's decision that the FBI also was violating the federal Privacy Act, the court said the judge had "applied too narrow a test" in the case. The court threw out that decision and told Freeman to apply "a correct legal standard."